

## **"SOME BETTER THING FOR US."**

"Art thou greater than our father Abraham which is dead and the prophets are dead? Whom makest thou thyself?" John 8:53.

In being born of a virgin, Jesus had taken "the seed of Abraham" and so continued until he was 30 years of age when, in baptism he consecrated his being to God a living sacrifice. He was accepted, and from that moment, being begotten of the Spirit and sealed as a new creature, he is a partaker of the divine nature, the human nature (Abrahamic seed) being the thing sacrificed.

Consequently in this conversation with the Pharisees Jesus calls Abraham their father and God his Father. (Vs. 54,56). We answer for Jesus then, that he at that time was greater than Abraham and the prophets, in as much as they were only justified men – human nature – while he (since baptism) was begotten of the Spirit and a "partaker of the Divine nature." He was then, as much better and greater than them, as the divine nature is superior to the human.

Abraham became heir to the righteousness which is by faith; that is, he was "justified freely from all things," but this did not change his nature; no, it left him still a man – but a righteous man. Those who become heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, follow Abraham thus far: They also believe God and are justified as men, and then, they go further than he; being called of God they present themselves living sacrifices, as Jesus did and are accepted in the beloved and thus (by making their calling and selection sure), they become as Jesus did – "partakers of the divine nature." These exceeding great and precious promises Abraham and the prophets heard not of and therefore were not called, to run for the prize we seek.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob while in some respects noble characters receive much of their lustre and grandeur from their being

used as types of spiritual things. We have often noticed many ways in which Abraham was a type of our heavenly Father and Isaac the son of promise a type of God's Son, our Lord: Rebecca, Isaac's wife, was a type of Jesus' bride – the church, who soon will become joint-heirs with him to our Father's inheritance.

The promises to Abraham were all seemingly, of an earthly sort, and until the Spirit through Paul unfolded them, it was impossible to see anything but earthly promises to a human seed; but now thank God we see how all of those promises made to Abraham will have a fulfillment, just as they were made to him and much as he understood them; and we also see beyond Abraham the type, to him whom he typified – the true Father of the true Isaac – in the fullest sense, "The Father of the faithful" who is himself calling us to be the Bride of His only Son and heir of all things. And when we apply to our Father, God; instead of to the type, Abraham, the words: "In Thee and in Thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed," we see a strength and depth of meaning never discerned when we applied them to the type. No, Abraham is no part of "The Seed"; neither is he in any but a typical sense, its father for, "One is your Father even God."

What shall we say then, is there unrighteousness with God? Did he make promises to Abraham, which he never intended to fulfill and in which he was only a type? No, the promises which God made to Abraham were all of an earthly kind and so Abraham must have understood them; but, God foreknowing his own great plans, so arranged those earthly promises that the higher – spiritual blessings and spiritual seed, would be hid in earthly promises, until in his own due time, His spirit should, through Paul, reveal it to the church. This mystery of the spiritual seed **[R219 : page 2]** was kept secret in past ages, but is now revealed. Eph. 3:9.

Now let us look at any of the promises made to Abraham or expressed by the apostles, and we find them all susceptible of earthly

fulfillment. We will examine some of them shortly, first stating the reward we expect Abraham to get and then seeing how the promises accord.

To Abraham and the prophets God will give, "a just recompense of reward" undoubtedly – all that was ever promised them and probably much more than they ever expected; yet they, may never receive the spiritual gifts promised only to Jesus and his Bride. We repeat, that the prophets knew nothing of "our high calling" to be joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Jesus said of John the Baptist, the prophet – "there hath not risen a greater;" (Matt. 11:11.) yet this greatest prophet did not claim the honor of being a part of the Bride but said: "He that hath the Bride is the Bridegroom: but the friends of the Bridegroom which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice: this my joy, therefore is fulfilled." John 3:29. Thus does John tell us that his joy and privilege was not to be of the Bride, but to be a friend of the Bridegroom and to introduce him. Moses also was a great prophet, yet Paul does not class him with the spiritual house of sons, for he says, "Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant...but Christ as a son over his own house, whose house are WE?" Heb. 3:5,6.

Since (as shown in the preceding article) the anointing or begetting of the Spirit to a new nature (the spiritual) began with our Head, Jesus, we conclude that none of the patriarchs or prophets were thus begotten; and if not begotten they never can reach birth or a perfection of spiritual being (like unto the angels and like unto Christ's glorious body). How then will they be resurrected we enquire – with what body will they come? They belonged to the human family and will be raised human (earthly) beings. By their faith, they were justified as men; (reckoned free from sin and its penalty, sickness and death), and in the resurrection they will we believe be raised perfect men.

Herein will be the value of their faith, viz: that while the world in general will be raised to a measure of life only, and require faith and works during the Millennial age to prove their harmony and test their obedience to God and thus come gradually to perfection, these ancient worthies will, because tried and found worthy and justified by faith, be raised in the glory and perfection of earthly being.

Let no one forget that there is a "glory" attaching to the earthly. There are "celestial (spiritual) bodies and bodies terrestrial (earthly): but the glory of the celestial is one (thing) and the glory of the terrestrial is another." 1 Cor. 15:40.

Raised in the perfection of being, how they would tower above others on earth, degraded as all humanity is by sin. How naturally would come to them the homage and respect of the whole race. They would naturally assume the place first given to Adam

– "A little lower than the angels" –

crowned "with glory and honor" and set over the works of God's hands: – "Have thou dominion." (See Heb. 2:7 and Gen. 1:28.)

## **THE NEW JERUSALEM**

is a figure of the coming kingdom of God. It represents, we believe, both spiritual and earthly beings. When first seen (Rev. 21:2.) it contains only the Bride, it has not reached earth yet – it is "coming down from God out of heaven." From the commencement of the reign of Christ, the kingdom or dominion of God will commence; it will continue to overthrow evil and establish right, until in the end of the time of trouble the kingdom ("New Jerusalem") shall have reached earth, and it shall be established here, during the Millennial reign (of which that city is the figure).

As we have already seen, the real rulers of earth will be the Lord and His Bride, invisible to humanity because of a new and different

nature – spiritual beings – the new "powers of the air:" but there will be earthly agencies, made use of in ruling and blessing and restoring mankind – just as the present "Prince of the power of the air" now makes use of human agencies (governments and men), in oppressing and degrading.

There will then be true "civil service reform," and none but perfect beings will be allowed to hold office, or be identified with the government; and each earthly one as soon as he learns of the goodness and love of God, will seek and be assisted, to approach the kingdom (New Jerusalem). "They shall bring the honor and glory of the nations into it: And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth (sinful) neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." (Rev. 21:26.)

The whole world will be on trial for life, [life as human beings – as Adam had it] and the conditions will be their coming into full harmony with the Kingdom (New Jerusalem) and its laws of love to God and men. None other, shall enter the kingdom or be enrolled of the Lamb as worthy of life. In the end of the age all who have not entered (the symbolic city) will be destroyed. (Rev. 20:14,15.)

We see then, that the kingdom (dominion – recognized authority) of God, "cometh not with observation, neither shall men say, lo, here! or lo, there!" for the kingdom when it cometh, will be in their midst, a spiritual unseen power; but as it proceeds and conquers, it begins to have human representatives (who can be seen) who continue to increase until the kingdom shall be, "Under the whole heavens" and shall "Fill the whole EARTH." (Dan. 2:35).

Now, in this kingdom there will be a work for spiritual beings to do, viz: to overrule, oversee and reward with perfection of being and continuous life, all who shall prove themselves worthy of it – who will thus be delivered from the bondage of corruption [sickness and dying] into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. [Adam was thus gloriously

free, before sin bound him to death]. And there will be work for humanity in the glorious restitution of all things, for they will be co-workers with the Lamb, the Spirit and the Bride.

Now we can perhaps understand why it is, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," ("we shall see him as he is" for "we shall be like him," – also spiritual beings) and yet, men shall see the Patriarchs, for we read:

**"YE SHALL SEE ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD,**

and ye yourselves thrust out." (Luke 13:28). The earthly phase of the kingdom was all that ever had been revealed until Jesus came and taught concerning a kingdom higher, into which humanity (flesh and blood) could not enter.

It was this (earthly) kingdom they sought and which had been promised them – the dominion over all nations to rule and to bless all others. It was this earthly phase of the kingdom which had been established in a small way under David, and this the Jews in Jesus' day claimed still to represent; and now notice Jesus' words – "You yourselves (shall be) thrust out." – They could not be thrust out of a thing which they were not in, in some sense; and they were in the earthly kingdom, in the sense that they as a nation had all been typically cleansed by typical sacrifices, and thus constituted a figure of the future earthly kingdom, into which will enter none but those absolutely cleansed from all sin by virtue of the "better sacrifices."

If then Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets, justified by faith, shall be raised perfect men, and as such will be in perfect harmony with God, we see how they would be the first of the earthly element of the kingdom. With this thought of the spiritual and human parts of the kingdom of God, and the necessity of the spiritual, being first perfected before the human would be possible, let us remember

Jesus' words, "There **[R219 : page 7]** are last (the Gospel church) which shall be first (or chief), and there are first (Abraham, the prophets, etc.) which shall be last" (or under). Luke 13:28-30.

But, can the promises to Abraham be thus fulfilled? We think so – let us see. We read (Gen. 12:1-3), "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country [Chaldea] and from thy kindred and from thy father's house, unto a land which I will shew thee, and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." If Abraham be placed at the head of the (earthly) kingdom, all this can be accomplished.

Again we read (Gen. 13:15,16): "All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed forever; and I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered." [There is not much need of urging that this does not refer to the "little flock."]

Again (Gen. 17:7,8): "I will give to thee and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger – all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession."

Again (Gen. 22:17): "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is by the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Now unless we can see more seeds than one in these promises, we will **[R220 : page 7]** have confusion: but if we can see that the earthly is to be as the sand, and that the blessing seed is Christ and the little flock under him, we may see how Abraham might suppose it all to belong to the natural seed. And indeed we should not know of the distinction were it not revealed through Paul. (Gal. 3:29).

Paul, in Rom. 4:16, seems to mention both of these seeds (natural and spiritual) when he says, that God's promise was "of faith, to the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the Law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham who is the father of us all (...) like unto Him whom he believed, even God." [We give the marginal reading which conveys the true idea, viz: that Abraham was the actual father to one of the seeds and a likeness of the Father of the other – "even God."]

Let us next read from the sermon of Stephen, the second Christian martyr, (Jesus being the first) about God's promise to Abraham. He says (Acts 7:1-6): "The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham... and said unto him, 'Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and come into the land which I will show thee.' Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Charran: and from thence...he removed and came into this land wherein ye now dwell. And he gave him none inheritance in it, no not so much as to set his foot on, yet He promised that He would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him....And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land and that they should bring them into bondage and entreat them evil four hundred years."

Let no one question therefore that there is an earthly seed to be blessed with earthly blessings as men, and that the promise to Abraham associates him especially with that seed, and not with the higher one whose father is God.

Paul speaks of Abraham's hopes, saying (Heb. 11:8-17): "By faith Abraham when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance obeyed; and went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise...dwelling with Isaac and Jacob heirs of the same promise: For he looked for the city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God." "These all died in faith, not having received the



promises (the things promised – the land wherein they dwelt, etc.), but having seen them afar off...and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth. For they that say such things declare that they seek a country, and truly if they had (wished) been mindful of that country from whence they came out [Chaldea], they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now, [instead of returning] they desire a better (the promised) country, that is an heavenly, (Canaan in the heavenly kingdom). Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." The city to which we have seen Abraham and the Prophets are coming, is the Millennial Kingdom into which they shall be the first to come on the earthly plane, and whose earthly seat of government will probably be Canaan the very land here mentioned, in which they sojourned as strangers.

Paul proceeds to add to his list of ancient worthies David, Samson, Rahab and the prophets who succeeded in various undertakings because of faith in God: and he suggests the thought that these faithful ones will also get a reward in "the city" being prepared. But after mentioning all these Paul adds: "These all having obtained a good report through faith received not the promise [the chief or "high calling"] God having provided

### **SOME BETTER THING FOR US**

that they without us [the Christ] should not be made perfect." That is, they shall not perfectly receive, the things promised them until THE SEED [Christ] has first received its reward; until the New Jerusalem shall come down; then the promises made to them, shall all be accomplished or "made perfect."

And now methinks, some one would say, "Art thou greater than our father Abraham...and the prophets? Whom makest thou thyself?" To which we answer in Jesus' words, "If I honor myself my honor is nothing: it is my Father that honoreth me." No, dear brethren and sisters, none of us could have imagined such a "high calling" as we

have received; but as we read his promises we should be unworthy of them did we not believe and confess and accept them, with grateful hearts.

As we see the exclusive character of the call to be joint heirs of "Glory, Honor and Immortality" let us lay aside every weight and run for it. The prize given to the patriarchs is almost beyond human comprehension, and yet God has PROVIDED some better thing for us. I shall praise him eternally for the opportunity provided even if I should not "so run as to obtain" it. But why should I not attain it – why should you not obtain it? Our justification is complete – it is Christ that died. Our call is official, it is "of God in Christ Jesus." True, we are weak, but He who invites us says, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Haste then to perform your covenant; to present your bodies living sacrifices. The time of sacrifice will soon be over – haste to make your calling and election sure by submitting yourself to God, who will work in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

-----